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**REGIONAL CALENDAR**

**JUNE**

- **June 12-13** — Southeast Rural Transportation Workshop, Atlanta
- **June 15** — Building the Basics for a Better Tomorrow Workshop, Valdosta
- **June 15** — SGA Workforce Development Board & Youth Council, Adel
- **June 21** — City/County Clerks Meeting, Echols County
- **June 22** — RDC Board Meeting, Adel
- **June 24-27** — GMA Annual Meeting, Savannah

**JULY**

- **July 4** — Holiday
- **July 26** — Assoc. RDCs EDpros, Macon
- **July 27** — RDC Board Meeting, Adel



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# in the REGION

**JUNE • 2006**

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A publication of the South Georgia Regional Development Center

A leader in the development of local and regional programs since 1963.

## GIS helps solve the puzzle of new Sex Offender Law

**B**eginning July 1, new sex offender laws will take effect that place an increased responsibility upon Sheriff's Departments across the state. Currently, all sex offenders must register their home address with the sheriff's department of the community in which they choose to reside. And each time they move, they must re-register. But the latest changes to law include restrictions upon where sex offenders can reside. Georgia Law states that these offenders cannot "...reside or loiter within 1,000 feet of any child care facility, church, school, or area where minors congregate. Such distance shall be determined by measuring from the outer boundary of the property..."

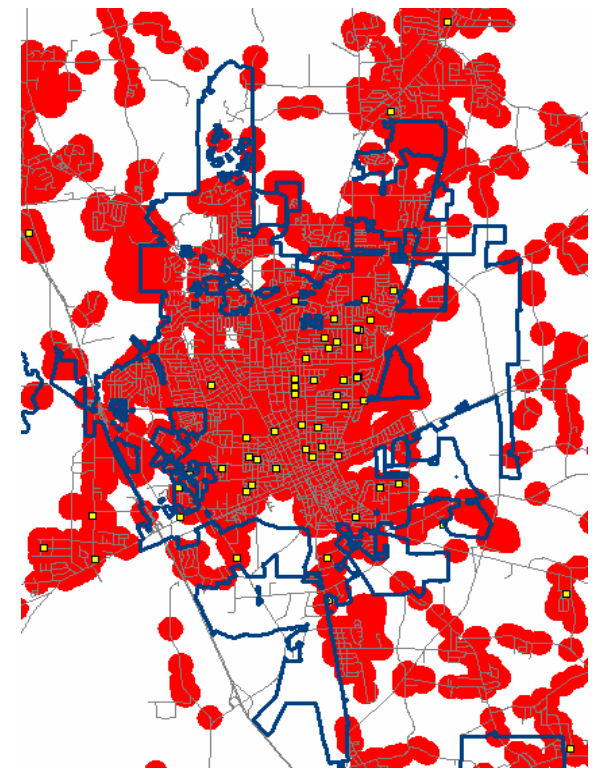
As you can imagine, this dramatically changes the offender monitoring roles of sheriff's departments across the state and increases the liability involved in this task. In addition to being aware of the activities of the ones they monitor, deputies must also be spatially aware of areas where children may congregate. This includes designated bus stops, public pools and other areas not specifically stated in law.

This increased responsibility and potential liability is one that Sheriffs are not taking lightly and they are searching for tools to get the job done. This is where SGRDC-GIS enters the picture. SGRDC-GIS is delivering a low-cost tool to Sheriff's departments in our region that illustrates clearly, the areas are in which a sex offender cannot reside. The abilities of GIS to perform spatial selections upon tax parcels and then create buffers from those parcel boundaries make it an excellent tool for identifying no-go zones.

So how do deputies get their hands on this valuable information? First, the buffers are constructed by SGRDC-GIS. Then that data along with streets, city limits, tax parcels and other layers are loaded into an ArcExplorer or ArcIMS map document and delivered to the Sheriff's Department. At that point, SGRDC-GIS provides some training to the users and the project is off and running. The only input required to make the project complete is the address of the sex offender. Since sex offenders are often transient, the project is built to accept the input of new addresses by the deputy at any time, and doesn't require any update by SGRDC-GIS staff. This means that if a sex offender moves several times a year, his monitoring agent always has relevant data to assess the situation and take action if necessary.

Currently, there are many websites and off-line tools that plot the location of sex offender residences but at this point, SGRDC-GIS is delivering one of the first to comprehensively, take the opposite approach and plot the locations of where they cannot be. The new law is spurring lots of debate about the long-term implications but the one thing that everyone agrees upon is that beginning July 1, the rules will change and the tools needed to manage sex offenders will need to be in place. A GIS is the tool for the job, and SGRDC can deliver it.

For information about this project and how to get this tool in your community, give us a call and we'll be happy to demonstrate it.



*This map illustrates the areas in which a sex offender should not reside in and around Valdosta. The areas in red represent 1000' buffer zones from the property lines of places that children congregate, including bus stops. Blue lines indicate city limits boundaries and the yellow dots represent recent residences of sex offenders that will have to move.*

Loan Program

Contact: Michelle Frey

Loco's Deli & Pub Opens in Tifton

Loco's Deli and Pub of Tifton opened for business in February 2006. Financing was provided by the South Georgia RDC through an SBA 504 loan in participation with Tifton Banking Company. There were 20 jobs created. Seth Dozier, a long time native of Tifton, is the sole owner. Matt Wright and Wade Hobbs are currently the assistant managers.



Loco's is a full service restaurant serving specialty sandwiches, hot wings, appetizers, salads, burgers, entrees and desserts.

Each menu item is made fresh and served in generous portions. Locos Deli & Pub offers patrons entertainment facilities including televisions and dart boards. Locos appeals to those seeking speedy service as well as people who wish to just kick back and relax.

The Loco's of Valdosta was also financed by the SGRDC through an SBA 504 loan. It has been open since the summer of 2004 and has been a very successful eating and dining establishment. The Loco's franchise began in 1988 as a hang out for a group of college friends in Athens, Ga. It caught on, and opened its first franchise location in October of 1997 in Gainesville, Georgia.

Information Technology Services

Contact: Vance Roberts

The City of Tifton's Website:

ITS Will Assist the City with Redesign

The City of Tifton has asked the South Georgia RDC 's ITS department for assistance in redesigning and managing their website.

This task has been assigned to Dieter Lisse and after meeting with the departmental members Dieter plans to incorporate different web design technologies to redesign and to manage the website for the City of Tifton.



Community & Economic Development

Contact: Sherry Davidson

Local Development Funds (LDFs):  
Two Communities Awarded \$20,000

The City of Fitzgerald received a LDF grant to create a park between the Grand Theatre and the Carnegie building to provide additional space for events held at these facilities and throughout historic downtown. This coupled with \$36,500 in cash from the City and \$7,500 in kind will help make the City's dream a reality.

Cook County Board of Commissioners received a LDF grant to replace 43 dilapidated windows in the courthouse with new historically appropriate windows to alleviate problems of rust and leakage. The County is contributing \$43,500 toward the project. This will be a huge step in helping to preserve the historical significance of the courthouse.

Regional Workshop held June 15:  
"Building on the Basics for a Better Tomorrow"

The South Georgia Regional Development Center held a regional workshop at the James H. Rainwater Conference Center on June 15, 2006 entitled, *Building on the Basics for a Better Tomorrow*.



Sponsored by South Georgia Home Builders Association, Valdosta-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce, and SGRDC, the workshop gave elected officials, planning commissioners, staff, and interested citizens the opportunity to learn about

quality planning policies and innovative land use design.

Approximately 70 people were in attendance and topics included "Surviving Rapid Growth," "Fiscal Impacts of Development," "Housing Initiatives and Funding Programs," "Planning for Quality Growth," "Stormwater Management Design," and "Innovative Design Concepts."



Workforce Development

Contact: Haley Hyatt

\$96,000 Extra for Dislocated Workers:  
Governor's Workforce Council Awards South Georgia Supplemental Funds to help Dislocated Workers

The South Georgia Workforce Development Board and WIA staff recently learned that Governor Sonny Purdue and the new Georgia State Workforce Board have awarded South Georgia an extra \$96,000 in Workforce Investment Act funds, to help serve citizens who are unemployed because of business and plant closures. The special funds will be used in conjunction with regular WIA monies to provide an array of retraining services, to ensure that South Georgia's dislocated workers remain a vital part of our workforce and economy.



\$36,000 for Summer Youth Jobs:  
Georgia Department of Labor Awards Special Grant

State Labor Commissioner Michael L. Thurmond announced the award of a special grant of \$36,000 to allow the South Georgia Workforce Board and WIA Program the opportunity to create summer jobs for 36 disadvantaged youth in the summer of 2006. SGRDC WIA staffers Pat Houseal, Cathy Parks, and Nancy Fitzpatrick have been working to recruit the youth and match them with worksites in our region. The 36 youth began working in mid-June, in summer jobs that will last for six weeks.



Summer Jobs Worker enjoyed helping children in her job in summer 2005

Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS):  
South Georgia Workforce Development Board Serving as the Official Strategy Committee for CEDS

The South Georgia Workforce Development Board (WDB), which oversees the region's WIA program, has taken on an additional job. Working with Jonathan Sumner, SGRDC Economic Developer, the WDB is helping create an economic roadmap to diversity to strengthen the regional economy. WDB Chairman Pauline Council stated, "Our board has always believed that economic development and workforce development are absolutely entwined; having the WDB serve as the CEDS Strategy Committee fits our mission well." The project is expected to be completed around August 2006.



WDB Vice-Chairman Jo Wingate and others listen to a presentation by Jonathan Sumner at the June 15 WDB meeting in Adel

Journey of a Young Hero:  
WIA Graduate Wounded in Iraq

Four years ago, a Valdosta teenager was arrested and thrown out of school. He dramatically turned around his life, when he decided to become somebody—serve his country after the tragedy of 9/11—and be a role model for his baby son. After entering the WIA youth program at the Valdosta Transition Center, Cody Finnessee completed his graduation requirements, and successfully went through the rigors of becoming a U.S. Marine. He served five months in Afghanistan in 2004, and seven months in Iraq.



Cody Finnessee, U.S. Marine

Another life transition occurred March 21 of this year, as Cody, team leader of a convoy, headed out of Fallujah on a mission. It was around 10 p.m. when an explosion rocked his truck. He felt blood on his face, and calmly began giving orders to his panicked men to find him a field dressing, which he applied to himself. He was helicoptered out, treated at several hospitals, and came back to Valdosta briefly for more recovery. In an interview with The Valdosta Daily Times, Cody talked about how he felt about his son, Zephon:

"I want my son to appreciate the ability to walk down the street and not worry about freedom," he said. "You need to be able to express yourself without consequences." Zephon thinks he sees his daddy on television, and it comforts Finnessee. "Every time he sees a Marine on TV he salutes and says 'da-da,'" Finnessee said. "I know I have an influence on him."



Marine Cody Finnessee reflecting on his son, Zephon

The next step for Cody? He's not done with his journey of growth and service. According to his family, he is presently at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina and has set for himself new goal in life, after he leaves the Marines – going to college and entering the field of law enforcement.

"Men are born to succeed, not fail." — Henry David Thoreau

"Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing." — Abraham Lincoln

"I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles." — Christopher Reeve

"To accomplish great things, we must dream as well as act." — Anatole France